

SIG SIG SIG SJ SIG SIG SIG SIG

COMPUTER
HOBBIEST

Sept '80

SIG BALLY member Hank Chiuppi will demonstrate his full ASCII add-on Keyboard for the Bally at our October meeting (Meeting starts at 11:00 a.m.). Everyone is invited to attend.

Our initial September meeting was well attended by 13 new members. Several people volunteered to assist with SIG BALLY activities and the following officers were appointed.

Mike Maslowski, President 654-8937
Manuel Martinez, Vice President 631-6623
Hank Chiuppi, Secretary 537-6079
Bob Stoops, Librarian 885-3164

We will create a software and Bally publication library. The publication library will contain reference material for both BALLY BASIC and hardware. The two Bally newsletters CURSOR and ARCADIAN will also be available for reference starting with the November issues.

For those of you who are not familiar with the Bally, it is a low cost Z80 based system which can be equipped with TV interface, joysticks, tiny basic, and cassette interface for around \$400. Plug in game cartridges are available and contain the same software and high speed graphic affects as the commercial Bally Arcade games such as space invaders, baseball and seawolf. The Bally 4K ROM version of tiny Basic called Bally Basic provides powerful graphic capabilities with the addition of LINE, MUSIC and BOX commands.

There are also commands to control the 3 voice MUSIC synthesizer. The main limitations of the Bally are very limited program memory (1.8 K), lack of a full keyboard (programs must be entered on a calculator style keyboard and lack of high speed cassette or disk interface).

Most of us bought our Bally units as a starter kit with a promise from Bally of an add-on unit which would turn it into a full home computer. Alas, the add-on unit never arrived, but the built in expander has been a challenge that Bally backers have been tackling with some success. Bally owners have been successfully interfacing full keyboards and printers to the Bally for sometime now. A 4K memory add-on with two serial I/O ports and expandability to 16K has recently been announced in kit form for \$130.00. A 8K basic ROM to access the extended memory should be available by year end. Other types of add-on boards are currently being developed to provide high-res graphics and disk interfaces. Also, Bally's consumer products division has recently been bought out by Astro-Vision. Astro-Vision has stated that they plan to revive plans for the add-on unit.

The Bally on board ROM's have very powerful graphic capabilities for anyone into graphics and video art. There are production reject boards available in the Chicago area for about \$25.00, as is, or

\$70.00 repaired. These could be used by other systems such as TRS 80 or Northstar, as a graphic driver, if someone is willing to tackle the interface. (Work is currently being done on a TRS 80 interface).

--Mike Maslowski